

June 9, 2006

Dear Coconino County Registered Voters,

As the Presiding Judge of Coconino County Superior Court I would like to encourage voters to study the proposed Jail District sales tax increase that will be on the September 12th ballot. The jail is a vital part of the criminal justice system and allows judges to address sentencing options, provide public safety, and deter future criminal behavior. During the sentencing of an offender, the judge takes numerous factors into consideration to determine an appropriate sentence. This is done on a case-by-case basis depending on the nature and circumstances of the crime. If jail is determined to be an appropriate sentence, the judges need resources available for possible incarceration to ensure public safety in our communities. While judges often use a variety of alternatives to incarceration, certain laws mandate jail sentences for particular crimes.

Coconino County has developed a formalized Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) to focus on system-wide, policy level justice planning and coordination issues. As the Chair of CJCC I believe the Council has made progress on the issue of jail overcrowding by researching alternatives to sentencing and by proposing specific programs to address community problems such as mental health and substance abuse. These ideas partnered with monies from the proposed sales tax increase will provide a comprehensive approach to improve the health and safety of our communities.

I would ask that each voter consider the benefits of the proposed increase to further enhance the overall safety of our community which is a fundamental responsibility of our government and support the increase.

Sincerely,

Judge Fred Newton
Presiding Judge
Coconino County Superior Court